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HORRIBLE HISTORIES

COLLECTION

The BIZARRE TSARS



BASED ON THE BEST-SELLING BOOKS WRITTEN BY TERRY DEARY AND ILLUSTRATED BY MARTIN BROWN

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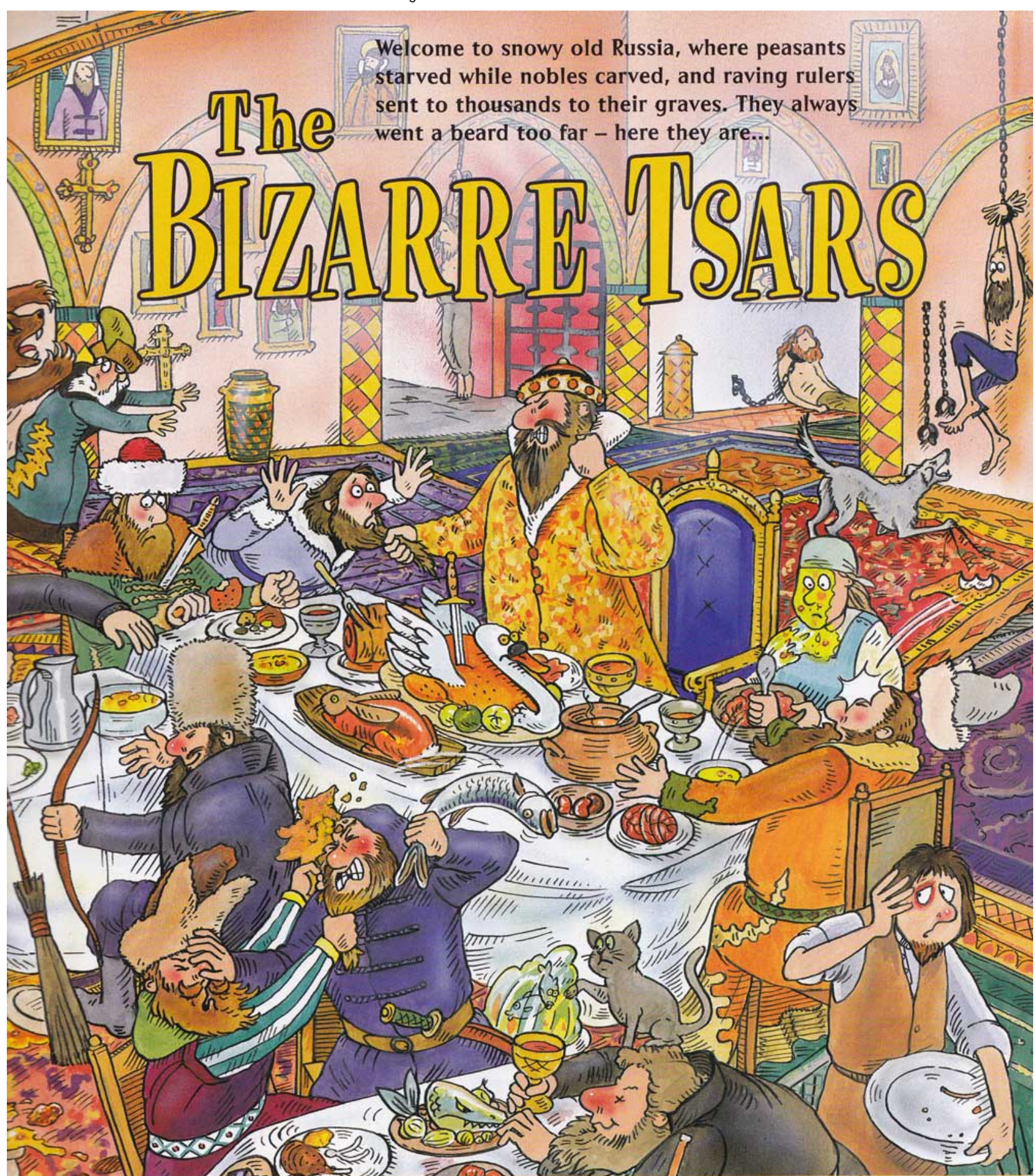
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Welcome to snowy old Russia, where peasants starved while nobles carved, and raving rulers sent to thousands to their graves. They always went a beard too far – here they are...

The BIZARRE TSARS



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Tsar Wars

HERE'S THE STORY OF SOME OF HISTORY'S BIGGEST, BADDEST AND MADDEST MONARCHS – THE TSARS OF RUSSIA. IT'S A TALE OF BATTLE, BLOOD AND BETRAYAL!



WELCOME TO RUSSIA. FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, IT WASN'T A PROPER COUNTRY AT ALL, JUST A BUNCH OF CITIES – RULED BY DUKES OR PRINCES – THAT KEPT ON ARGUING WITH EACH OTHER.



IN RUSSIA, THERE WERE TWO MAIN TYPES OF PEOPLE – THE BOYARS (RICH NOBLES, WHO OWNED THE LAND) AND THE POOR PEASANTS (WHO DID ALL THE WORK).



BUT RUSSIA CHANGED WHEN IVAN III RULED MUSCOVY (THE AREA AROUND THE CITY OF MOSCOW). HE GOT MORE LAND BY BULLYING THE SURROUNDING LORDS – INCLUDING HIS OWN BROTHERS. IVAN ALSO DECIDED THAT BEING PRINCE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM. HE LIKED IT WHEN PEOPLE CALLED HIM A 'TSAR' (RUSSIAN FOR CAESAR) INSTEAD.

I DEMAND THAT YOU GIVE ME ALL YOUR LAND!



IVAN'S SON VASILY BECAME TSAR WHEN HIS DAD DIED. HE USED HIS DAD'S DIRTY TRICKS TO CONQUER MORE LAND, AND BEFORE LONG HE CONTROLLED ALL OF RUSSIA.

WHEN VASILY DIED, HIS SON IVAN WAS CROWNED TSAR – AT THE AGE OF 3! AS A KID, THE YOUNG TSAR WAS ALWAYS GETTING PUSHED AROUND BY THE BOYARS WHO HUNG AROUND COURT...



BUT WHEN HE GREW UP IVAN TOOK CONTROL, TORTURING AND KILLING THE BOYARS WHO HAD MESSED WITH HIM. THE POOR PEASANTS THOUGHT THE GREEDY BOYARS DESERVED IT.



IT WASN'T ONLY THE BOYARS THAT SUFFERED, THOUGH. IVAN ALSO DECLARED THAT MOST OF THE PEASANTS WERE NOW 'SERFS' - FARMERS WHO WERE OWNED BY THE BOYARS - LIKE SLAVES.



IVAN'S REIGN OF TERROR DIDN'T STOP THERE. HE STARTED HIS OWN ARMY OF BULLIES (THE OPRICHNIKS) WHO RODE AROUND TERRORISING THE BOYARS AND THE PEASANTS ALIKE.



WHEN IVAN DIED WHILE PLAYING CHESS, THERE WERE FEW WHO MOURNED HIM.

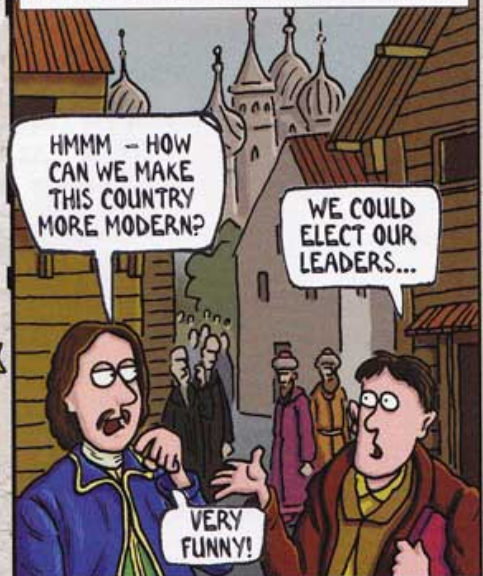


IVAN'S SON FEODOR BECAME TSAR. HE WAS THE OPPOSITE OF HIS DAD. HE WOULDN'T HARM A FLY - AND WAS A BIT DIM. HIS FAVOURITE HOBBY WAS RINGING CHURCH BELLS.



FEEBLE FEODOR HAD NO KIDS - SO AFTER HE DIED, THE RUSSIAN NOBLES SPENT THE NEXT FEW YEARS FIGHTING OVER WHO WOULD BE TSAR NEXT. THIS WAS A VERY CONFUSING TIME.

IN THE END, THE ROMANOV FAMILY WON. THERE WERE SEVERAL BRILLIANT, BATTY AND BONKERS ROMANOV TSARS. THE MOST FAMOUS, THOUGH, WAS PETER THE GREAT. HE WAS OBSESSED WITH MAKING RUSSIA MODERN AND EUROPEAN.



Cannonballs from the Government guns blasted the Jacobites to bits. Bodies (and heads, arms, legs and other bits) went flying through the air.

Bonnie Prince Charlie was supposed to be a hero, but he was really a bit of a cowardly custard. When Charlie realised that the battle wasn't going so bonnily, he scarpered!

The Jacobite battle plan was too simple. They just charged at the Redcoats and tried to chop 'em up. It didn't really work.

The Jacobite 'tartan terrors' may have been brave, but they were hungry, outnumbered and out of luck. They got cut to bits. But worse was yet to come for the Scots. The British Government would take terrible revenge on the Scots for this rebellion.

DIE, YOU TRAITOR!

DIE, YOU TRAITOR!

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT!

Scot vs. Scot! Lots of Scots thought that the Bonnie Prince was really a bit of a Charlie – so they fought on the Government side.

Scary Supertsars

Russians often call their country 'Mother Russia'. Well, here's just a few of the mad and manic monarchs who helped make their Mother absolutely miserable!

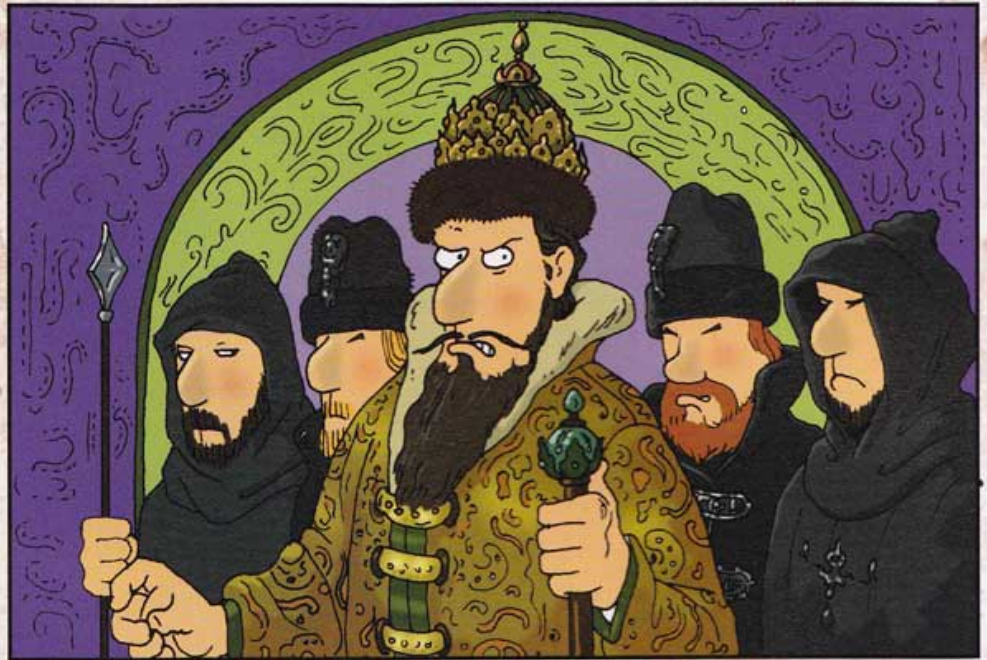
Poisonous Profile

Name: Ivan 'The Terrible' Rurik.
(The Russians called him *grozny*, which means 'the Awesome'. This was translated as 'the Terrible' – and it stuck. Well, it suited him!)

Born: August 25, 1530

Mum and Dad: Vasily III and Yelena Glinskaya

Brothers or sisters: Little brother Yury.



IVAN THE TERRIBLE RULED: 1533-1584

Ivan was a cruel and crazy ruler. When he was only 17 he decided to call himself 'Tsar of all the Russias'.

Tsar is Russian for *Caesar*, and it was his way of claiming to be related to ancient emperors (fibber!).

His first wife, Anastasia, kept young Ivan relatively calm, but when she died in 1560 he went absolutely bonkers. He created his personal army of bullies, the Oprichniks, whose job it was to kill and torture anyone he didn't like the look of. And he didn't like the look of an awful lot of people!

Angry Ivan

When Ivan got angry, he used to foam at the mouth like a horse. But it wasn't just his temper that got out of control. He also ate and drank far too much. He got fat, his guts started to rot, his skin peeled off and he really stank. So he acted terrible, looked terrible... and smelled pretty terrible too.

Bizarrely, despite his endless killing and torturing, Ivan thought of himself as a very spiritual bloke, and he loved praying. So much so that one day he decided to turn one of his palaces outside Moscow into a monastery – and make himself an abbot!

He chose 300 of his favourite Oprichniks and turned them into his monks. Ivan spent mornings praying and singing with these mean monks, and then after a nice meal and a nap he would pop down to the dungeons to watch prisoners being tortured by his faithful thugs. How 'holy' horrible.

Did you know?

Ivan loved English things – especially the Queen! Even though he already had a wife, Ivan once decided he had to marry Elizabeth I. Liz had no intention of marrying anyone, least of all a nutty Russian Tsar. She offered her grand niece instead. Gee, thanks great aunty!



IVAN'S ILL-FATED FAMILY

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...



DIED



BUMPED OFF



SENT AWAY



DROWNED



SURVIVED



HIS WOEFUL WIVES ...

ANASTASIA

Ivan thought she was poisoned by his enemies



MARIA

Ivan got bored of her, so he bumped her off



MARFA

Died 16 days after marrying Ivan



ANNA

Ivan sent her to a convent



ANNA

Anna-nother one bites the dust!



VASSILISSA

Ivan caught her flirting, so he impaled her boyfriend on a stake and sent her to convent



MARIA (another one)

Just after marrying her he found out she'd already had a boyfriend, so he drowned her the very next day



MARIA (yes, another one!)

The lucky one - she outlived him



...AND THREE OF HIS CURSED KIDS

LITTLE DIMITRI

He was taken on a long trip with his dad, caught a cold and died suddenly. (Some say his dastardly dad drowned him)



IVAN

He shared the Tsar's taste for blood and loved joining him on weekend massacres. But dad bashed his head in during a row



FEODOR

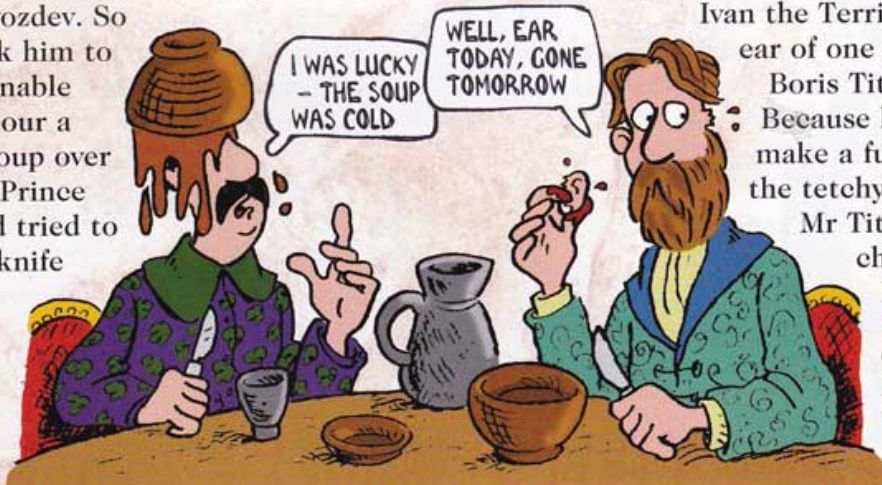
Became Tsar after Ivan died. A bit odd all round. He preferred bell-ringing and playing with clowns to being Tsar



How to survive dinner with Ivan

- **Don't scream - even if he pours boiling hot soup over your head**

At one of his dreadful dinner-dos, Ivan got irritated by a Prince called Gvozdev. So what did Ivan do? Ask him to be quiet? Well, reasonable old Ivan decided to pour a bowl of boiling hot soup over Gvozdev's head. The Prince screamed in pain and tried to flee, so Ivan stuck a knife in his chest. Ivan then called a doctor and ordered him to save his guest. "Save my good servant. I have jested a little



too roughly with him." And the doctor replied: "So roughly that only God can bring him back to life. He is no longer breathing."

- **Don't complain - even if he chops bits off you**

Ivan the Terrible once cut off the ear of one of his dinner guests, Boris Titov, as a joke.

Because he didn't want to make a fuss that would upset the tetchy Tsar even more, Mr Titov didn't even change his expression.

Instead, he thanked his Majesty for 'this gracious punishment' and wished him a happy reign!



WHEN IVAN ATTACKS!

Ivan came to the throne after his dad died. Ivan was only three at the time, so his mum ruled in his place for a while. But then his mum was poisoned and the boyars started running things instead. The beastly boyars argued, swore and murdered each other. Ivan was petrified that they were going to get him next.

NOBLE NOBBLER

The nobles treated little Ivan horribly, leaving him to wander about the palace dressed in rags, and often forgot to give him any dinner. This was the start of Ivan's special hatred of nobles. Years later, when Ivan became very ill, he asked the nobles to promise that if he died his little son Dimitri would be put on the throne after him – but they refused. Ivan recovered from his illness – but he never forgave the nobles for letting him down.

In fact, he took every chance to get his own back on them – by nobbling them in weird and wicked ways. When Ivan was only 15, a nobleman said something rude to him – so Ivan ordered his tongue to be cut out.



BOYAR BURNER

In 1547, the people of Pskov complained to Ivan about some nobles who were treating them badly. Ivan was outraged, so he made the nobles undress and lie on the floor. Then he had their hands tied behind their backs, poured boiling alcohol on their heads – and set fire to their hair and beards with a candle.

But before Ivan could decide how best to finish them off, a messenger arrived and said that the bell of the Kremlin, a fortress in Moscow, had fallen down



without explanation. The Tsar, who was very superstitious, thought it must be a bad omen, so his lucky victims were allowed to run for their lives!

HOW'S THIS FOR A HATPIN?



It wasn't just rotten Russian nobles that Ivan nailed. An foreign ambassador forgot to take his hat off inside Ivan's palace – so Ivan nailed it to his head!

SIGHT FOR SORE EYES!

In 1552, Ivan conquered Kazan from the Tatars – the eastern people who had made a habit of raiding and ransacking parts of Russia. To celebrate, Ivan had a beautiful church built in Moscow. It had lots of onion-shaped domes in different dazzling colours. According to some stories, when the church was completed, Ivan decided he didn't want anyone else to build another one as beautiful – so he ordered that the architect's eyes be cut out just in case!

BISHOP BASHER

Ivan didn't seem to like abbots and archbishops either. He had Cornelius, Abbot of Pskov and his student Vassian Muromtzev crushed to death by a millstone.

And he ordered that Leonid, Archbishop of Novgorod, be sewn into a bear's skin. Then, for a bit of sport, Ivan sent pack of hungry hounds after him. The dogs tore poor Leo to shreds.

But it wasn't just the posh that Ivan bashed. He

could be unspeakably spiteful towards to peasants too. During the famine of 1575, he invited some starving beggars to his house to eat. Instead of feeding them, he killed them and threw them into the river just for a laugh!

PETER THE GREAT RULED: 1682-1725

Peter was really 'great' in one way – he was 6ft 8in (over 2m) tall! He was strong, too – he could crush a silver plate with his bare hands!

Peter preferred his old dressing gown and a worn-out pair of shoes to a fancy Tsar costume, and was happier getting drunk with sailors than sitting at a stately dinner.

But then Peter was always a bit different. When he was young, his games of toy soldiers used real boys for soldiers and cannons

loaded with real gunpowder! And while he was growing up, he had a go at loads of jobs that you wouldn't expect a Russky royal to do, like sailor, carpenter and blacksmith. But guess what? Big strong Tsar Peter was terrified of cockroaches!



Dangerous dentist

This Tsar had some bizarre ways of enjoying himself. For a start, he loved to rip out his chums' choppers if



they had a toothache. The trouble was Peter was so strong that he tended to tear out lumps of their gums at the same time. Yowch!

BUILT ON MUD 'N' BONES



After he captured the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea from the Swedes, Peter decided it was just the place for a new city – St Petersburg. But the spot he chose, a muddy puddle in the middle of nowhere, had few people – so he had to force tens of thousands of men from the rest of

in tiny, filthy huts, and horrid diseases killed thousands of them. Some had to use their bare hands instead of tools – and if they didn't work hard enough, they were whipped, stabbed or just plain executed. And that's why St Petersburg is known to this day as 'the city built on bones'.

Russia to go there to work on it. Many villages lost all their men to the Tsar's building brainwave.

MUDDY MISERY

The men had to live in tiny, filthy huts, and horrid diseases killed thousands of them. Some had to use their bare hands instead of tools – and if they didn't work hard enough, they were whipped, stabbed or just plain executed. And that's why St Petersburg is known to this day as 'the city built on bones'.



Dwarf deeds

Peter loved a party, so he formed 'The All-Drunken Synod of Fools and Jesters' with his pals – a kind of church for getting drunk. No one was allowed to leave their parties for three days, so they all ended up soaked in alcohol, sweat and vomit, while fighting other in fits of drunken rage.

This giant also had a soft spot – for dwarves! Peter once organised a dwarf wedding attended by 72 dwarves, and loved to surprise guests by cutting open pies with live dwarves hidden under the pastry.



CATHERINE THE GREAT

RULED: 1762-1796

Catherine was more than a match for those mean men Tsars. She was smart, stern, sassy and savage. Her dad was an unimportant German prince, so this Russian empress was actually a German. She was also a...

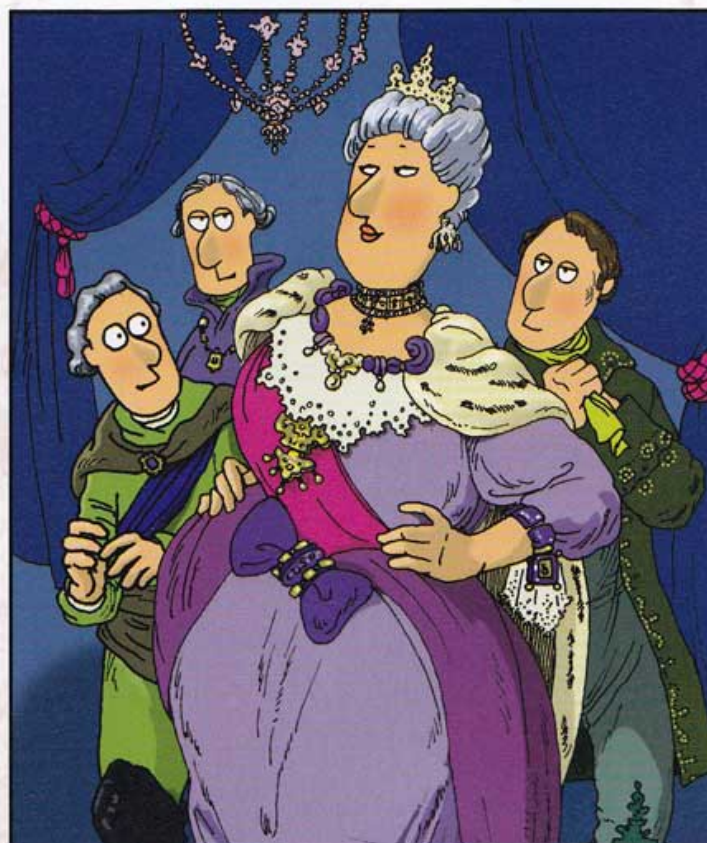
Hubby hater

When she was only fifteen, Catherine married the heir to the Russian throne – another Peter. He was a total let-down, a grunting goon who spent his time playing soldiers in bed. Once he hung a rat in his bedroom because he said it had killed one of his toys! So Catherine got herself a secret boyfriend.

After Peter became Tsar, he plotted to get rid of his wife. But Catherine made the first move – she knocked Peter off his throne with a little help from his old guards. She was crowned Empress in September 1762 – and pathetic Pete was bumped off soon after.

Famous flirter

Having boyfriends became quite a habit with Catherine. She had loads of young, good-looking men friends throughout her life – even when she was old. Her favourite one was Grigory Potemkin –



it's thought she married him in secret. She had loads of ridiculous nicknames for him, like 'lion of the jungle', 'golden cockerel' and 'little parrot'. Bet she wished she'd kept those secret, too!

War wager

Like Peter the Great, Catherine tried to turn Russia into a powerful and modern country. She built grand buildings all over St Petersburg and turned it into a beautiful city. And by fighting wars she managed to make Russia bigger by 200,000 square miles. As if it wasn't big enough already!

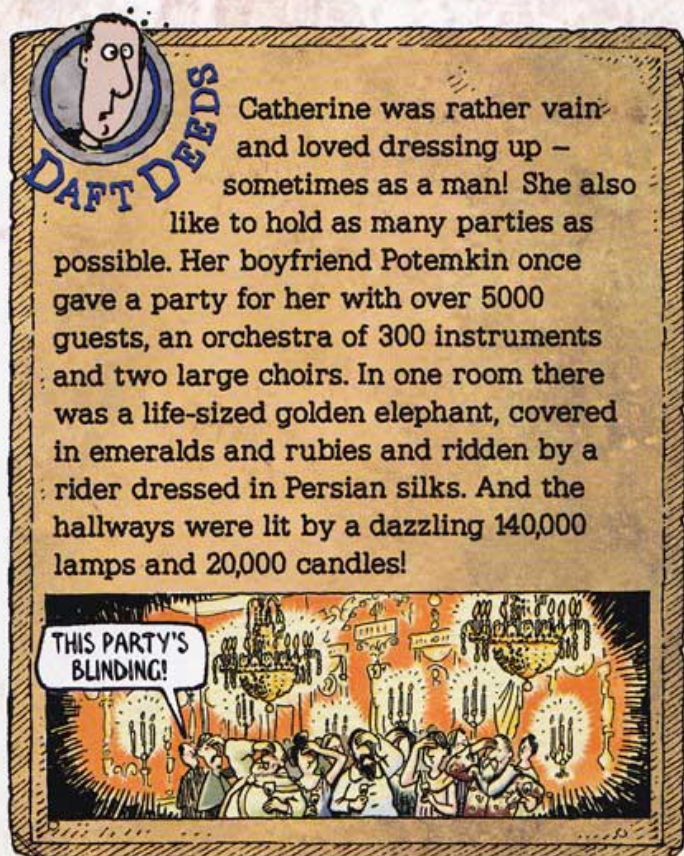
Peasant punisher

In 1773, a horrid plague led to a huge uprising of peasants organised by a bloke called Pugachov – who pretended he was Catherine's dead husband! She had Pugachov captured and brought to Moscow in a cage – to have his arms and legs hacked off.



French teacher

She also forced everyone in her court to speak French, which was the trendiest language at the time. Sounds familiar? Your French teacher is even more like a mad monarch than you thought!



Novgorod

Ivan needed money to pay the Oprichniks, so his men went around 'taxing' the priests of Novgorod. The choice was simple – cough up the cash, or get bashed to death!

Like father, like son! Ivan junior was there to cheer his dad on.

Ivan joined in the fun, spearing screaming citizens as if they were human kebabs.

These sinister black-hooded horrors were members of Ivan's special gang of Oprichnik monks.

In 1570, Ivan the Terrible heard a rumour that the people of Novgorod were plotting against him – so he and his Oprichniks attacked the city. Weeks of death, terror and torture were to follow...

Awful Antifreeze

Finally, after weeks of bashing, blood and death, Ivan decided that the people of Novgorod weren't traitors after all and went home. Nobody knows for sure how many poor souls had been slaughtered by then, but it may have been as many as 60,000. The people of Novgorod said that Ivan's insane attack spilled so much blood into their river that it didn't freeze over in winter for years afterwards.

Some scared citizens got tied up and thrown into sledges, which were then pushed into the freezing cold river.

Novgorod WAS famous for its beautifully carved wooden houses. Of course, they caught fire rather easily...

The Oprichnik's own badge of terror was a broom and a dog's head. It's been said that some carried around real brooms and real dog's heads!

Ivan was a bit like an evil chef. He enjoyed cooking his victims, and often had them roasted, fried, baked or boiled!

Terrible Terror Trail

If you thought Novgorod was nasty, brace yourself for the loathsome low-down on Ivan the Terrible and his band of horrid henchmen.

In the winter of 1564 Ivan got into such a strop that he decided to quit his job and leave Moscow.

Ivan claimed that the nobles were greedy cowards who had tried to kill him. Whingey Ivan also said that he was fed up because the Church was always nagging

and criticising him. He said the country could find itself another Tsar!

The people were horrified. They went on a rampage, screaming: 'We have no Tsar! The Tsar has abandoned us!' So the nobles and the Church begged Ivan to come back. He agreed, on one condition – that he would be allowed to rule his country however he liked...



WIN SOME, LOSE NONE

Ivan divided his country in two. One part, which he called the Oprichnina, would be looked after just by him. This included most of Russia's richest cities and the best land, which he took away from the nobles.

The rest of the country he left to the remaining nobles to look after. He sent away thousands of nobles penniless to the far reaches of the Empire. Others were condemned to death and their whole families and all their servants were often killed as well.

To look after all his land, the Tsar created his own army of thugs – the Oprichniks. He picked the rudest and cruellest men he could find.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN MY ARMY?

I'D RATHER BURN MY ENTIRE FAMILY!



OK, YOU'RE IN!

for the rest of his life.



He put them in special houses and paid them loads of money. Each awful Oprichnik had to swear to be faithful to Ivan

THE 'ORRID OPRICHNIKS



The Oprichniks really were a horrible bunch. If you insulted one of them you could be instantly put to death. They fined people, tortured men and women, poked out the eyes of children, looted houses, or burnt entire villages for no reason at

all. And the more violent they were, the more Ivan praised and rewarded them, so the worse they got.

Pretty soon the Oprichniks were terrorising the whole of Russia, and everyone feared and loathed them. Entire villages

were abandoned. Corpses lay in the fields and along the roads and people hid trembling in their homes. If you saw them galloping towards your village, you knew you were done for.

To make themselves extra scary, they dressed all in black. They rode on black horses and their saddles carried their special badge of terror – a dog's head and a broom – the dog for hunting down the Tsar's enemies and the broom to sweep them away. They were ready to commit any crime in Ivan's name – terror for Mr Terrible.

Did you know?

Only one man had the guts to stand up to Ivan. He was Philip the Metropolitan of Moscow, the most important person in the Russian church. Philip warned Ivan that he was killing too many people and that God would punish him. But this didn't stop the charming Oprichniks!



I'M HAVING A BRUSH WITH DEATH!

They burst into Moscow's cathedral during Mass. In front of a huge crowd of people they tore poor Philip's clothes off and drove him out of the church with brooms. Then they chained him up and threw him into a cell in a monastery. Later Ivan got one of his strongest thugs to strangle Philip with his bare hands – just because Philip wouldn't bless Ivan.

Massacre in Moscow



When Ivan returned from Novgorod, it wasn't long before he fancied another massacre. In the great square of the Kremlin his workmen set up 17 gallows, an enormous cauldron of water suspended over a bonfire, a frying pan as big as a man, and special ropes stretched so taut that they could saw bodies in two.

Hundreds of prisoners were prepared for a mass execution. July 25, 1570 was the date fixed for the great festival of blood.

ROLL UP, ROLL UP...EVERYONE'S WELCOME

Executions then were usually as popular as football matches are now. But on this lovely summer's day, the people of Moscow were hiding in their homes. They thought that Ivan was planning to do what he'd done in Novgorod.

Disappointed with the poor turnout, the Tsar ordered his guards to round up as many people as possible. He even rode through the streets himself, assuring the people that they wouldn't be harmed

and urging them to come and watch the great performance. Eventually a crowd gathered and the Tsar had his audience.

GRUESOME ROLL CALL

The names of all the victims were read aloud – and then the killing began...

- Prince Ivan Viskovaty was hung by the feet, while his flesh was cut into strips
- Ivan's treasurer, Funikov, had boiling and ice water poured over him in turns until his skin came off like an eel's
- A boyar was placed on a barrel of gunpowder and blown up
- Other people were boiled, beheaded, hanged, hacked into little pieces, grilled in a roasting pan, impaled,...

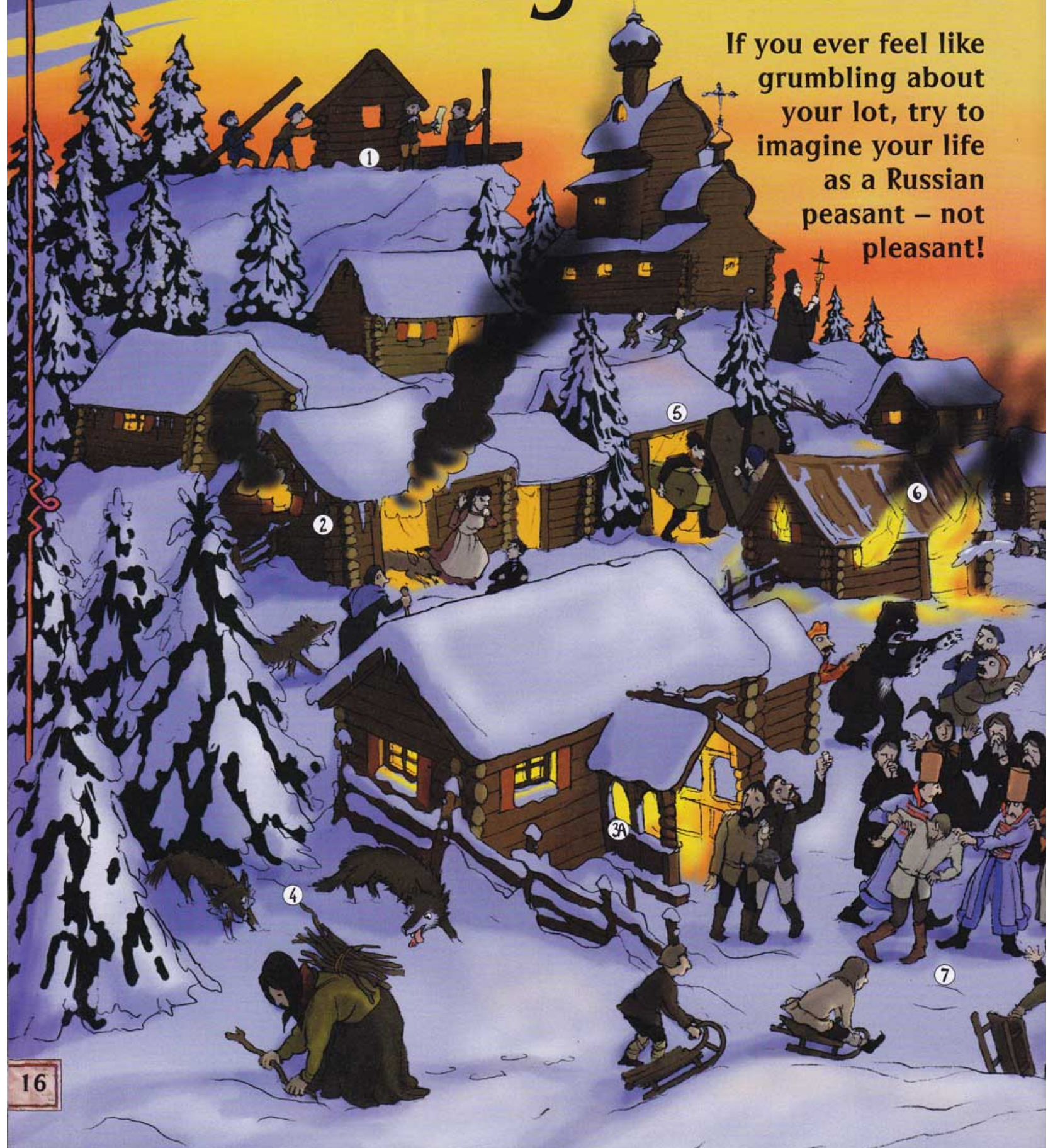
So many dead bodies were left lying around that the smell became unbearable. Ivan ordered the bodies to be chopped up so that the remains could be moved easily.

The dogs of Moscow had plenty of meat to eat that summer. Yuck!



Vile Village Life

If you ever feel like
grumbling about
your lot, try to
imagine your life
as a Russian
peasant – not
pleasant!



A Dozen Dreadful Facts about Unpleasant Peasant Life

1. The average peasant house was made out of logs that were fitted together without any nails – a bit like a kit.
2. The insides of these houses could get pretty stinky – because most of them had no chimneys, and the family's farm animals were often kept indoors!
3. Peasants relaxed by getting drunk on vodka at a Russian-style pub called a *kabak* (3A). Drunk peasants would trade almost anything for vodka – including their clothes! Often they stumbled out of the *kabak* dead drunk and stark naked! (3B)
4. Wolves lived in the deep Russian forests, but they wouldn't usually attack people, unless it was winter and food was scarce... oh dear, looks like trouble then!
5. Russia was often struck by war, famine or disease – so the undertakers were kept busy.
6. Wooden houses and indoor fires were a recipe for disaster.
7. Of course, if you were really unlucky you could be dragged off to fight (and die) in the Tsar's army.
8. If a peasant was found guilty of a small crime, he usually had a choice of paying a fine or getting a whipping. Most chose the whipping (it was cheaper!).
9. The village sauna or *bania* was a favourite spot. The Russians liked nothing better than having a good sweat – followed by a dive into an icy pond!
10. Villagers had to hand over most of their grain as taxes to the Tsar, to their local boyar and to the church. The greedy grain tax was collected even if there was a famine and the family was starving.
11. Starving peasants who were short on grain could always eat 'famine bread' made from weeds. Swallowing it was difficult – but keeping it down could be impossible!
12. As if life wasn't bad enough already, the pitiful peasants never knew when the Oprichniks would turn up for a little bit of looting, pillaging and slaughter.





Foul Folklore

Life was so tough for the average peasant that they had to believe in something to get them through. And they did – a magic mix of superstitions, spells, spooky spirits and sprites.

The Russian church tried to stop people using magic, but even Ivan the Terrible consulted sorcerers. Every village had their own wise person. This person was usually an old woman – a *babushka* who would help locals to

cure illnesses and cast spells. But the villagers had to be very careful. If they got on the wrong side of a *babushka*, she could turn very nasty. It was widely believed that a *babushka* could ruin marriages, damage crops and even kill children.

Superstitions & Spells

Cross your fingers and thank your lucky stars that you aren't as easily fooled as these poor Russian peasants...

Russian peasants were so superstitious that they thought that almost everything that happened to you – whether it was sneezing in the morning or having your trousers eaten by a mouse at night – had an important meaning.

- A cuckoo flying or a hare running through a village, a dog howling with its head raised, mice or cockroaches leaving your house or a cricket coming in all meant that a fire was about to break out.

If you pricked your tongue when you ate it, you'd be married soon.



- If a pregnant woman gave some bread, honey or vodka to a bear and it growled, it meant she was expecting a girl. But if it stayed silent, she would have a boy.
- Some people believed that when you went to heaven,

Foul Facts

The soap and water that was used to wash a corpse before it was placed in a coffin was thought to have magical powers. It was even used by women to make their breasts smaller. And you thought plastic surgery was disgusting!

you had to know where every part of your body was – so they kept all their nail clippings and never cut their hair! This is why Peter the Great's law that forced men

- The girls of Novgorod used to kick stable doors three times with their left heel. If the horses came running, the girls would be married within a year.
- If a girl took a cockroach from a neighbour's house and put it under her pillow at night, she would see her future husband in her dreams.



- A more painful practice was to bake a loaf with a needle inside it.

RIDICULOUS REMEDIES



If your baby was weak and puny, you could try 're-baking' it. This involved putting the baby on a bread shovel and inserting it three times into a warm oven! 'Re-baking' was supposed to make the baby stronger.

When plague was nearby, village women would go out at midnight or dawn – stark naked! They would drag a plough anti-clockwise around the village, singing, screaming, swearing and making as much noise as possible to frighten off the disease.



LOVE SPELLS

- Love spells were very common. If you wanted someone to like you, you could put some of your own sweat into the food or drink of the person you had your eye on.
- If your wife kept running away, it was a good idea to give her a lark's heart.
- Another spell involved the man spitting in his hand, saying a spell and then slapping the poor girl he fancied across the heart.

to shave
really
made men
'bristle'.

Curses of all
sorts were very
popular. They worked
best if you killed a black cat

while you said them. If you were just a bit miffed with someone and didn't actually want to kill them, you could give them the hiccups by saying 'Misery hiccups afflict this man. Shake and torment him to the end of his life!'

But be warned, curses can backfire... In 1815, a poor peasant was found guilty of sending an evil spirit to his cousin in the form of hiccups and was condemned to 35 blows of the knout. (The knout was a very heavy whip that could snap your spine with a single stroke. Yowch!)

Terrible Tools of the Trade



- Various animals parts – horses' heads, bears' heads, paws, claws, bats' wings, dried heads of frogs and snakes – were used as ingredients for spells.
- Blood, sweat and pee were a must-have for any serious spell-caster.
- For the most evil spells, you'd definitely need to get your hands on some graveyard earth or some human body parts. One magic manual recommended cemeteries as a good place to find the bits of corpse you might need for that especially spiteful spell.
- 'Dead candles' – candles made from human fat stolen from a grave – were useful if you wanted to send someone to sleep or kill them. In 1889, four peasants were convicted of chopping up a girl to make candles out of her so that they could rob a house without waking up the residents.
- If you were very rich, you might be able to afford the most amazing magic prop of all – a unicorn's horn. Ivan the Terrible had one. But unicorns never existed! The horn probably came from a narwhal, a kind of tusked whale.



If your house caught fire and you wanted to stop it spreading, you were supposed to lead a bear around your flaming home three times. If you didn't have a bear handy, you could run around the house completely naked with a piece of communion bread in your mouth!



A cure for drunkenness! Go to the grave of an unknown person and open it, push a needle through the shroud, strain water through the shroud and the eye of the needle, recite a spell, drink the water and re-bury the corpse – not easy when you're drunk!



The weirdest one of all! An old book of remedies recommends the right eye of an eagle placed on one's left breast as protection against the anger of Tsars and princes. But what about protection from angry one-eyed eagles?



Spirits & Sprites

Moody, mischievous, and not to be messed with...

Russian folklore is full of spooky stories about spirits and sprites. Can you spot them before they spot you?



In the home...

Each house had its own house spirit or *domovoi* who lived behind the stove, in the attic or under the threshold. He usually protected the family, but could also misbehave. To keep him quiet, it was a good idea to leave food out by the stove for him.

House spirits were usually invisible, but you could catch a glimpse of one around Easter... if you smeared your head with butter from seven different cows that had been milked for the first time, put on a new outfit, went to church and turned around at a special point in the service!

When you moved house, you either had to invite your old

domovoi into your new home or greet the new one. If you weren't careful, you could end up with two living in the same place – and they'd start fighting! So if you hear any sudden bangs or your pet seems strangely upset, you could have a *domovoi* dust-up going on. What you have to do is bang on a wall with a broom – and shout at one of them to clear off! Sometimes the *domovoi* had a wife – *kikimora*. She was just as tricky – if she thought the household was sloppy and needed tidying up, she'd tickle the children in their sleep.



In the sauna..

One of the most gruesome goblins was the rascal who lived in the sauna or *bania* – the *bannik*, a naked dwarf with long claws. The *bannik* spied on women if they were bathing alone. If you upset him, he might throw scalding hot



In the forest...

The *leshi* was a goatly guy who hung around with wolves and could change into almost anything you'd find in a forest – plant or beast. He also appeared as a man who would lead you the wrong way. You'd emerge in your village in a daze – and covered in moss. (You 'moss'd' have got lost!)

In the river...

Then there was the *vodonoi* – a water spirit who lived in ponds or streams. He could either appear as a beast with huge toes, horns and a tail or as an old man. He was easy to spot in human form, 'cos the left side of his coat was always dripping wet. Pouring melted butter on his watery home buttered him up.



Starve or Stuff

Things were so hard for most of the year that when it was finally festival time the people went party crazy!

While nobles and Tsars feasted on vast plates of delicacies, such as stuffed stomach and pickled elk heart, peasants had very little food. Their diet was dire, and mostly the same every day – bread and groats (oats without their husks) or cabbage and beetroot (yum). The most popular peasant drink was *kvas*, a kind of beer made from stale bread.

Crop crisis

Peasants depended on the land – only nobles and posh people had enough money to buy food. So a bad crop could mean famine and death for a whole family. But they had a few tricks up their tunics to make sure they had a happy harvest.

- To stop weeds from growing, peasants would bury a cat alive in their field. A foul and unfair feline weedkiller.
- If a field was dry and they needed it to rain, peasants could throw a priest on the ground and drench him in water. Better still, throw a complete stranger into the river!

WOODCHIP CHIPS

In Ivan the Terrible's time, the 'orrid Oprichniks' scared peasants so much that they stayed indoors. This meant that their crops didn't get harvested, so there wasn't enough food to go round. Soon the only thing on the menu was tree bark! In some parts of the country, people were so famished that they had their dead friends and relatives for supper – literally!

I'M AFRAID IT'S BIRCH BURGERS FOR LUNCH – BUT YOU'RE HAVING GRAN FOR DINNER



EVERYONE LOVES A PICNIC

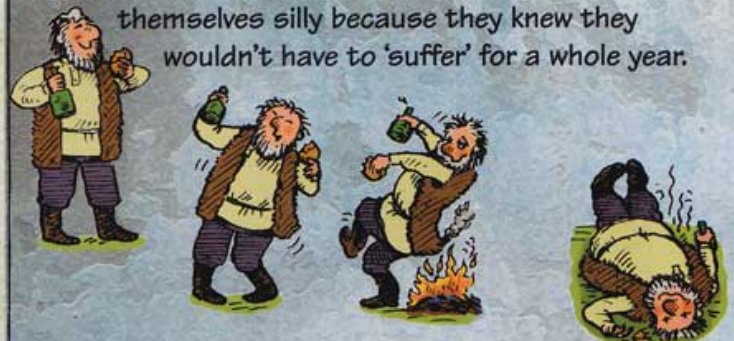


The only things a peasant had to look forward to were feast days. They were the only days when they had got to have fun and, if the harvest was good, eat a lot.

Sadly, feast days were few and far between compared to the number of days peasants had to do back-breaking work from morning to night.

The hardest time of year was harvest time, which was nicknamed 'the suffering'. The entire village would come out to the fields and work together, day in day out, for several weeks until all the crops had been harvested.

In October when the hard work was finally over, the peasants held the harvest festival. They danced wildly, sang all night, ate until they burst and drank themselves silly because they knew they wouldn't have to 'suffer' for a whole year.



- Another festival, held in April, was definitely NOT approved of by the Church. Families took picnics down to the graveyard to share with their dear dead relatives. (Note: the dead relatives were NOT part of the picnic!)



Puzzles

Who's Tsary Now?

Test your knowledge. You can find the answers to three of the questions in the magazine – for the fourth, you're on your own!

1. Peter the Great taxed men if they didn't
 - a) grow their hair long
 - b) shave off their beards
 - c) have droopy moustaches

2. ... and then he built St Petersburg on a big
 - a) swamp
 - b) mountain
 - c) burger

3. Ivan the Terrible's Oprichniks dressed in
 - a) track suits
 - b) white robes
 - c) black robes



4. The Russian alphabet is called Cyrillic. It was invented by a saint called
 - a) Cyril
 - b) Russel
 - c) Ivan

SUPERSTITION SWITCH

Four peasant beliefs have got their outcomes mixed up. Can you work out which meant what?



Spot the Difference

St Basil's Cathedral in Moscow was Ivan the Terrible's pride and joy. The picture on the right does it credit. But some foolish person has tampered with the picture on the far right. Can you spot the eight changes that have been made before someone gets their eyes poked out?



Odd Job Man

Peter the Great tried his hand at all sorts of jobs.
Which tools and working clobber were used by
this mad multi-jobber?

Wicked Wordsearch

Find Ivan the Terrible's favourite
people, places and things in
this worrying wordsearch.

O	M	S	T	S	A	E	F	O	C
R	P	N	V	T	P	I	H	T	R
M	P	R	A	Y	I	N	G	O	E
O	D	X	I	O	D	S	F	R	Z
S	I	N	W	C	R	V	E	T	U
C	J	K	I	A	H	S	K	U	B
O	M	L	Y	T	U	N	B	R	P
W	F	O	K	H	F	X	I	E	U
C	B	H	O	D	V	O	D	K	A
P	K	I	L	L	I	N	G	T	S

PRAYING	VODKA
OPRICHNIKS	BOYARS
TORTURE	KILLING
FEASTS	MOSCOW

Oops! Which one shouldn't be here?



CARPENTER



SAILOR



BLACKSMITH



DENTIST

Answers

Odd Job Man
Guess what? Handy man Peter the Great
had all of those jobs!

BOYARS shouldn't be on the list - Ivan
didn't like them AT ALL

P	K	I	L	L	I	N	G	T	S
C	B	H	O	D	V	O	D	K	A
W	F	O	K	H	F	X	I	E	U
O	M	L	Y	T	U	N	B	R	P
C	J	K	I	A	H	S	K	U	B
S	I	N	W	C	R	V	E	T	U
O	D	X	I	O	D	S	F	R	Z
M	P	R	A	Y	I	N	G	O	E
R	P	N	V	T	P	I	H	T	R
O	M	S	T	S	A	E	F	O	C



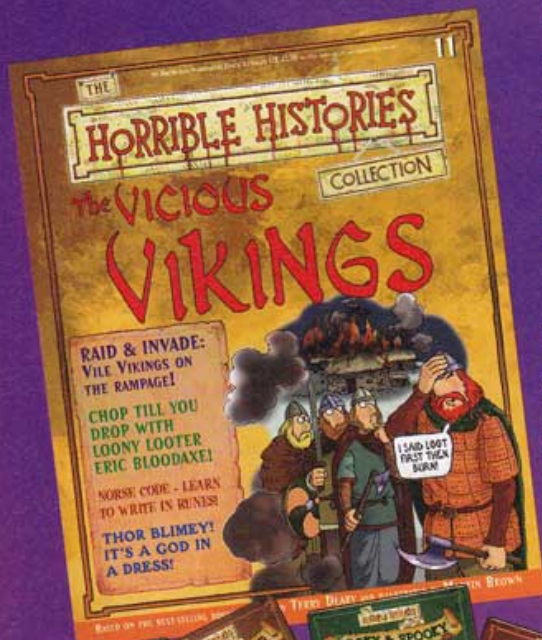
Who's Tasty Now?
1. b), 2. a), 3. c), 4. a) Yes, Cyril
Actually,
no one's sure if he really made it up
himself - but it's certainly named
after him.
Superstition Switch
If your palms itched it meant you'd
get money; achesy joints meant you
were going on a journey (maybe the
Oprichniks were going to whisk you
away); whistling indoors was bad
luck and meant you'd lose your
money; and believe it or not, if a
girl got a needle in her tongue, it
was supposed to be a good thing -
it meant she'd get married soon!

DON'T MISS ISSUE 11

THE VICIOUS VIKINGS

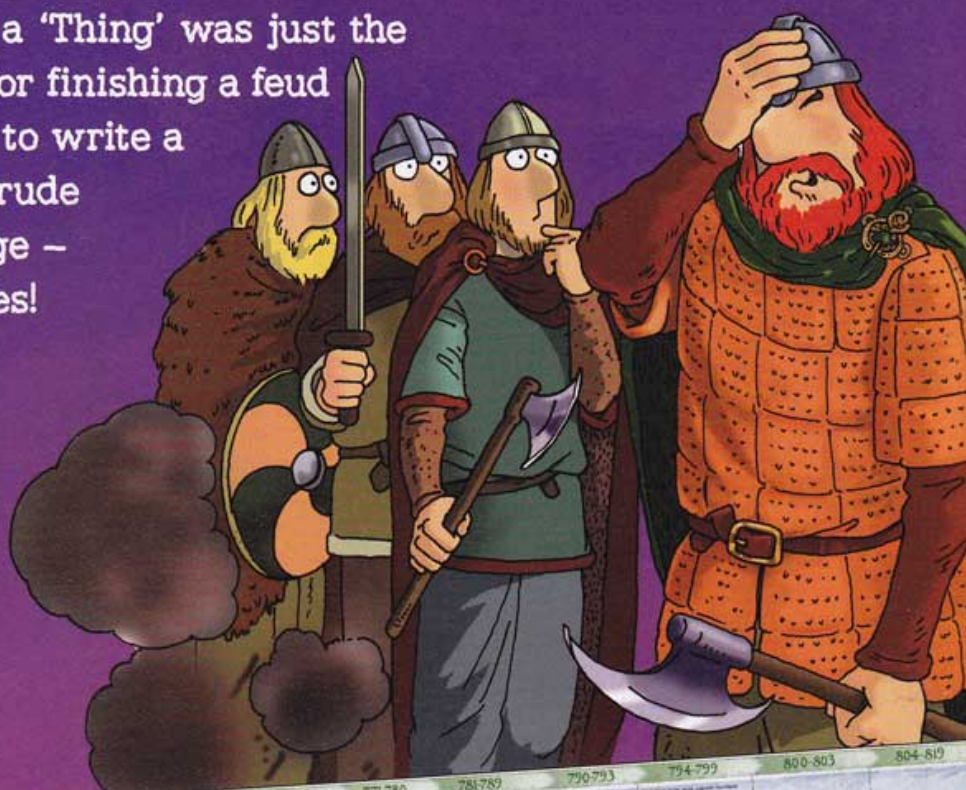
Want to know...

- when the world was washed in a flood of giant's blood
- why a 'Thing' was just the thing for finishing a feud
- how to write a really rude message – in runes!



Four fantastically Wild 'n' Wicked cards to collect including a fabulous Flip 'n' Flick action card

Another episode in the Terrible Timeline of history



ISSUE 12

THE TERRIBLE TUDORS: MISERY MARY

The Tudor Queen who went blazing mad for bonfires – especially with Protestants on top!

Find out:

- why 'Bloody' Mary's meat pies were packed with love
- how a Lady got lost on her way to the chops
- why Mary's burnings really went with a bang



More Wild 'n' Wicked cards to collect plus a Terrible Timeline

